DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 394 590 JC 960 325

AUTHOR Tulloch, Jacquelyn
TITLE Seven Principles for Good Practice in Distance Learning.
PUB DATE Feb 96
NOTE 7p.; In: The Olympics of Leadership: Overcoming Obstacles, Balancing Skills, Taking Risks. Proceedings of the Annual International Conference of the National Community College Chair Academy (5th, Phoenix, AZ, February 14-17, 1996); see JC 960 276.
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Community Colleges; *Computer Mediated Communication; Computer Networks; Course Objectives; *Distance Education; Educational Technology; Electronic Mail; Facsimile Transmission; *Program Design; *Program Development; Program Implementation; *Teaching Methods; Two Year Colleges

ABSTRACT

As enrollments decline, many institutions rush to implement distance education programs, often with only crude or solely administrative guidelines for program development. The following seven principles of good practice can be useful to guide initial program development: (1) programs should have purpose, direction, leadership, and clearly identified target audiences; (2) course objectives should be clearly defined and comparable to those for traditional classes; (3) faculty participation and leadership should be encouraged; (4) administrator and faculty roles should be clearly delineated; (5) faculty should be experts in the discipline content, as well as in the technologies available to support instruction; (6) choices regarding technologies should be based on content matter, learning objectives, and availability to students; and (7) students should be provided with information regarding the nature of distance learning and skills required for success. Once the program has been designed, the following low and high tech solutions should be considered in implementing the program: telephone and voice mail systems to support instruction; fax, "fax on demand," and, time permitting, paper mail systems to disseminate assignments and receive completed work; electronic bulletin board systems with electronic mail and asynchronistic discussion forums to permit group work; computer software and audio tapes to provide instruction; and local cable channels to air locally produced video. (BCY)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 394 590

SEVEN PRINCIPLES FOR GOOD PRACTICE IN DISTANCE LEARNING

By

Jacquelyn Tulloch
Director, Instructional Telecommunications
Dallas County Community College
Dallas, TX

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Paper Presented at the
Fifth Annual International Conference for
Community & Technical College Chairs, Deans and Other Organizational Leaders
February 14 - 17, 1996
Phoenix/Mesa, Arizona

IC 960325

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)
X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ACADEMY

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN **OTHER THAN PAPER COPY** HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

G. Filan

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)"

Jacquelyn B. Tulloch

Jackie is currently the Director of Instructional Telecommunications Services at the LeCroy Center for Educational Telecommunications, part of the Dallas County Community College District (DCCCD). In her current role she manages the faculty and student support services for the District's distance learning program which includes telecourses, modem based courses and live televised classes. The program has annual enrollments of approximately 10,000. Before becoming Director, Jackie was with the Educational Computing Division of the Center as content expert for the CASES computer project. Jackie also served as a Director of Counseling and Division Chair for Human Development/Physical Education at Brookhaven College in the DCCCD for seven years. Before coming to Dallas in 1982, Jackie worked in the Virginia Community College system as an Associate Professor and Coordinator of Counseling. Jackie completed her undergraduate work at Salem College (N.C.) and her M Ed. and Ed.D. at the University of Virginia.

Despite a somewhat ridiculous workload (common to most community college administrators), Jackie is an avid golfer and ice dancer.

As enrollments level or decline in community colleges, many institutions rush to implement distance learning programs which enable them to attract and serve new populations. While accrediting associations and state agencies frequently provide guidelines for the development of such programs, these are often crude or address administrative or organizational policies and procedures in the absence of what are often significantly different instructional processes. Establishing "good practices" in a distance learning program requires understanding instruction in terms of desired outcomes, design issues, and appropriate use of technology. Principles of good practice in initial program development include:

1. The program has **purpose, direction, leadership,** and clearly identified **target audiences**.

2. Course objectives are **clearly defined** and are **comparable to campus based, traditional classes** in terms of learning objectives, requirements, and rigor.

3. Faculty **participation** and **leadership** is encouraged and supported by administrators and others in the institution.

4. Faculty and administrative **roles** are **clearly defined** and can be **appropriately evaluated**.

5. Faculty are **expert in the discipline content** as well as in the **technologies** available to support the instructional process.

6. Choices regarding **technologies** are based upon the **content matter, learning objectives,** and **availability to students**.

7. **Students** are provided with **information** about the **nature of distance learning** and the **skills required for success**. **Support** in developing learning skills is **provided** for those who need it.

In addition to building on these principles as the basis for a distance learning program, formulating responses to each of the Seven Principles of Good Practice in Undergraduate Education [1] can be a useful point of departure for faculty and administrators as they begin development of courses and services for learners.

HOW WILL WE.....

.Encourage student-faculty contact?
.Support cooperation and collaboration among students?

1 Compiled in a study supported by the American Association for Higher Education, the Education Commission of the States, and The Johnson Foundation.

.Provide prompt feedback?
.Encourage Active Learning?
.Emphasize time on task?
.Communicate high expectations?
.Respect diverse talents and ways of learning?

The following discussion provides some direction in terms of the use of a variety of "high" and "low" tech solutions to these questions. While it is not a comprehensive look at all of the possibilities, hopefully it serves as a place to begin the process.

TELEPHONY:
In addition to **telephone** conversations and **answering machines**, the creative use of **voice mail systems** can provide support to distance instruction in a variety of ways. If there is a voice mail system at your institution, find out if the system is large enough to accommodate all of the students in the distance learning program. If not, there are relatively inexpensive software packages, such as The Total Communicator, which operate through a PC and provide enough mailboxes for 1000 students. This type of system allows both group and individual messages for faculty and students to access when convenient. For example, students might be reminded of an upcoming test review, provided with a correction to the syllabus, or receive individual feedback on an assignment or test. Voice mail systems have also been used successfully as a part of the instructional process in courses which require oral testing or collaborative writing, such as foreign languages or English composition.

In addition to providing communication between and among students and faculty, a voice mail system may be designed to provide potential students with consistent and detailed information regarding course objectives, materials, and requirements. Thus voice mail can help to establish realistic expectations on the part of students prior to enrollment.

Added to your telephone system, an **audio "bridge"** supports multiple callers talking together in a conference mode. This type of technology provides a means for conducting "on air" office hours, test reviews, and discussion sessions, with students participating from different locations. In addition, students are able to collaborate in small groups at times convenient to themselves.

FAX:
In addition to providing a means for the exchange of assignments and completed work in a timely fashion, "fax on demand" systems permit student acquisition of documents related to the course or the program, such as the syllabus, ancillary materials, or brochures.

SNAIL MAIL:
Time permitting, course newsletters and/or postcards with feedback on assignments and tests keep students informed. Faculty may also require students to submit postcards of introduction at the beginning of the course or at regular intervals throughout the course.

COMPUTER NETWORK SYSTEMS:
The use of an electronic bulletin board (BBS) with electronic mail, live teleconferencing, and asynchronistic discussion forums is invaluable to any distance learning program. It allows not only timely, flexible communications between students and faculty but also permits students to collaborate and work together in small groups while being separated by time and space. Sophisticated systems such as Galacticomm, First Class, and Wildcat! provide a connection to the Internet which may be used as a means for research as well as for linking with other classes or interest groups in other parts of the world. The technical support personnel at your institution will be able to provide information about the variety of computer-based options that are available at your location. If purchasing the necessary hardware and software is not an option, investigate the cost of leasing from a commercial vendor or cost sharing with another institution.

COMPUTER SOFTWARE PRODUCTS:
In addition to using computers for communication, software programs may also deliver portions of the instruction over a network or through an independent PC. Publishers now frequently provide programs such as practice tests, interactive exercises, and other learning aids on diskette or CD Rom along with the course textbook. In addition, electronic files containing course information produced locally, such as a multimedia lecture or chapter notes and outlines, may be put on diskettes for student use.

AUDIO TAPES:
Audio tapes may be used for a variety of purposes, such as providing a review checklist or an alternative explanation of a particularly difficult concept. Tapes may be placed in a Learning Resource Center for students to duplicate or check out. In addition, material may be dubbed and mailed to students. Distance learners are often quite willing to pay a fee to get additional support materials in a more convenient manner!

TELEVISION, CABLE, AND VIDEO:
Consider using a local cable channel to show locally produced video (live or recorded), which may not be a part of the required materials. Examples include orientations or test review sessions. In addition, incorporate relevant PBS, C-Span, or other cable programming into course assignments. If the production is live and in-house, provide a number for students to call in and ask questions. If

material is commercially produced or airing over an outside network, consider an audio bridge conference call-in after the airing. If such options are not available due to lack of equipment or funds, locate or lease a home video camera to record a review or presentation and arrange for check-out or lease through the library, bookstore, or other organization.

MEETINGS:
If students are not at a physical distance, orientations, discussion groups, test reviews, and individual conferences can be used to encourage active student involvement in the learning process. However, because scheduling is often a problem for some students, it is suggested that another, more flexible option for any meetings always be provided, if possible.

PRINT MATERIALS:
Clear, detailed, and error free print materials continue to be important to any distance learning program, but are critical when few other technologies are being used. Publicity efforts such as brochures and class schedules, as well as course syllabi, homework activities, and examinations all need to be carefully constructed and tested with students for clarity.

As indicated previously in the discussion of the basic principles for developing a sound distance learning program, the choices around the particular technologies to be integrated into courses and services must hinge upon the learning objectives, the discipline, and the students to be served. Attention to these factors should, by definition, address many of the Seven Principles for Good Practice for Undergraduate Education. However, the principles add an important dimension to decision making and ensuring effective responses to them is a task requiring both faculty and administrators to think creatively about the meaning and impact of distance in the teaching/learning process.